

SECRET

28 October 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

FROM:

25X1

SUBJECT: The Soviets and the 1984 US Elections

1. The questions of whether the Soviets attempt to influence the outcome of US elections, and of whether the Soviets have any real capacity for doing so, have never been addressed in any organized fashion.

2. It won't be long before various Soviet activities and proposals are regarded, at least by some, as part of a scheme to tip the 1984 US elections.

3. In theory, one can offer this argument:

a. On matters that affect the Soviet Union, such as defense spending, arms control, Third World insurgencies, and the East-West economic relationship, the policies of the likely 1984 Presidential candidates will differ markedly.

b. The election will come at a time when the Soviet Union is under tremendous economic pressure--due in part to policies of the present US administration.

c. After years of intense efforts by, among others, Arbatov and Company, the Soviet grasp of the US political system is better than ever. Hence the Soviet capacity for influencing votes is higher. [Some suggest that the Soviet Union's surprising lack of US grain purchases reflects an explicit decision to be unhelpful to Republicans running for election now.]

4. I propose a study to determine the evidence, if any, of Soviet efforts to influence previous US elections.

5. This study should also judge the prospects for such activity in 1984. And the study should outline what specific Soviet activities are plausible--e.g., a refusal to purchase US grain, a stated inability to reach arms control agreements with the present US administration, some sort of Third World peace offensive, etc.

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